



The Informationist

Taylor Stevens

Download now

Read Online ➞

The Informationist

Taylor Stevens

The Informationist Taylor Stevens

"Vanessa Michael Munroe deals in information--expensive information--working for corporations, heads of state, private clients, and anyone else who can pay for her unique brand of expertise. Born to missionary parents in lawless central Africa, Munroe took up with an infamous gunrunner and his mercenary crew when she was just fourteen. As his protégé, she earned the respect of the jungle's most dangerous men, cultivating her own reputation for years until something sent her running. After almost a decade building a new life and lucrative career from her home base in Dallas, she's never looked back. Until now."

The Informationist Details

Date : Published March 8th 2011 by Crown (first published 2011)

ISBN : 9780307717092

Author : Taylor Stevens

Format : Hardcover 307 pages

Genre : Thriller, Mystery, Fiction, Mystery Thriller, Cultural, Africa, Suspense

 [Download The Informationist ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Informationist ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Informationist Taylor Stevens

From Reader Review *The Informationist* for online ebook

Maureen Carden says

I've read *The Informationist* at least four times and just finished listening to the audio tape. Let me take a moment here, Hillary Huber narrated the audio and did a fantastic job. I might actually listen to The Bible being narrated if she was doing it. Okay, back to the *The Informationist*,

Vanessa Michael Munroe (VMM) burst out of the jungle, smuggled herself into the US (even though she was born here) and reinvented herself as an almost normal person.

A chameleon, she could take on the coloration of her surroundings. It helped that she was a polymath, able to pick up a language within days. VMM could also usually keep her demons inside. She utilized this unusual "skill set" and became one who could find out almost anything about anyone or anywhere for high end clients.

VMM didn't work cheap, but even she was shocked and intrigued by an offer of millions to go back into Africa to find a missing girl. Not her usual kind of work; then again, those millions. Plus her attorney and dear friend really wanted her to take the job. But VMM wanted a long rest from a year long job. A chance to become herself again; demons and all.

So welcome to the world of one the most intriguing, and beguiling characters I have ever come across. Those four readings and one listening should be a hint to how amazing I find VMM and her world. The action was non-stop, the setting of Central Africa, a true love/hate portrayal of a terrifying part of the world.

Read a bit about the author, Taylor Stevens, and you will encounter someone with a background far different from VMM, but just as fascinating and the wellspring of her portrait of growing up as an "other".

Cathy says

I think *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* has spawned a new genre of novel -- girls with abusive pasts who grow up into emotionally crippled, gender ambiguous women. The novel is set in Africa and that makes up for a lot; the detail is good and it seems well researched. At times this book teeters on the edge of romance novel. It was a fast read, entertaining enough for a plane ride, and who knew one could purposefully dislocate a thumb to escape handcuffs. Reading really expands my horizons.

Tulay says

Bought this book because of the reviews and it's title. Started and stopped couple times. Vanessa character is one hard woman, learned somethings about Africa. But overall story didn't much entertained me. Parts were really slow and bloody. As always money and how to deceive someone to get what they have.

Werner says

Note, Sept. 14, 2017: I just edited this review to correct a slight misspelling of one word.

The Goodreads description for this book simply quotes the first paragraph of the jacket copy, which gives the

impression that our heroine's adolescent career as part of a gang of gunrunners lasted for years. It didn't --she fled from Africa at the age of 15, after about a year with the gang. (They also weren't mercenaries, and their smuggling operations included drugs as well as guns.) Otherwise, the information is accurate as far as it goes. We meet her nine years later, when she's 24 years old. Before we do, though, we're treated to a two-page, attention-grabbing prologue, set somewhere in West Central Africa, describing a terrifying experience which we quickly realize is related to our main plot, and which gives us a little bit of information and a whole lot of tantalizing ambiguity.

Four years later, Michael is approached by a super-wealthy oil tycoon, who wants to hire her to trace the now four-years-cold trail of his adopted step-daughter, who vanished somewhere in Africa on the cusp of adulthood. Finding a missing person isn't something she's ever done; she's an information broker, a compiler of deep background on foreign countries, for governments, NGOs and corporations. But she's extremely good at this, blessed with a facility for learning languages, strong computer skills, a powerful intelligence and single-minded focus and determination. She's also a mistress of disguise, who (with her hair cut short and her bosom tightly bound) can pass for a male if she needs to. [Some reviewers focus on this, and on her preference for using her middle name, to make "androgyny" a central aspect of her character. IMO, this idea has been overstated; her character comes across as essentially female, without any ambiguity (though she's more in touch with her kick-butt side than many women are). Passing for a male is a tactical device that can come in handy in some situations (and she's not the only fictional heroine to find it so; Madeleine E. Robins' Sarah Tolerance, for instance, does it frequently), and doesn't entail any repudiation of her femininity. As for preferring "Michael" over "Vanessa," she's not the first person in literature or real life to want to change the way she's addressed after a major transition in her life --especially from a traumatic period that she'd like to forget. (Her African associates knew her as Essa.)] Anyway, Richard Burbank has been assured that these skills will be transferable to ferreting out the fate and whereabouts of a person, and that Michael can succeed where others have failed.

Combat-capable females aren't as rare in literature as they once were, but her fighting skills aren't what make Michael a rather unique fictional heroine (though she has few peers where those skills are concerned). She's a very complex and nuanced character, with aspects of her personality that aren't all pretty. Her missionary parents, who didn't plan for or want her, raised her in a mindset that sees God as an angry and condemning Judge rather than a loving and forgiving Father. The experiences of her African adolescence left her with massive internal abysses of guilt and anger which she uses her work to keep at bay; she has hardly any friends, and walks a psychological knife edge between moral decency and a homicidal darkness she could easily plunge into for keeps. Now, with the quest for Emily Burbank taking her back into a world she left nine years ago, she'll face external conflicts with some very nasty villains; but her most desperate and consequential battle will be inside herself, and she'll come to a moral decision that may save her --or destroy her.

Taylor Stevens' unique personal upbringing gave her a first-hand knowledge of a number of world locales; this is probably reflected in the vivid way settings in several countries on three continents are realized. (Some of Michael's formative experiences may have something in common with Stevens' own as well -- though one hopes not.) The African milieu that forms the main setting is particularly life-like, with a you-are-there immediacy especially marked in the portrayal of the dangerous, paranoid Twilight-Zone nation of Equatorial Guinea, the model for Frederick Forsythe's setting in *The Dogs of War*, a novel that Stevens references here (see my comment at www.goodreads.com/review/show/342479647). Her prose style is crisp and quick-moving, with a wealth of realistic detail that lends verisimilitude. All of the major characters are fully three-dimensional, adding to the texture and emotional evocative quality of the storyline. Plotting here is a *tour-de-force*, with major twists and surprises in store; the quality of suspense is very taut through much of the book, and comes right down to the wire.

This is an action-adventure novel, so the reader should expect that it's going to have some violence; more than a few people are going to get killed here. None of the violence is gratuitous, and it isn't over-described for its own sake; but some readers might find one scene a bit disturbing. There's no explicit sex, but some sexual encounters are noted without being described in detail, and Michael's sexual behavior is, like every other aspect of her life, affected by the psychic damage she carries. The most problematic aspect of the book in terms of content is the bad language; there's a lot of obscenity, and profanity/cursing. (For perhaps the first third or more of the book, this isn't so marked, but it gets worse.) Granted, a couple of the English-speaking characters could be expected to have barracks-room vocabularies, but "realism" isn't a useful excuse to invoke for putting English obscenities into the mouth of non-English speakers. It's also not likely that Michael's English speech would be that much colored by this kind of thing, given the probable absence of that type of peer modeling when she was developing her speaking style. I considered this stylistically lazy on the author's part, and deducted a star for it.

In a couple of places, I have a quibble or two with details. (A camera affixed to the peephole of a hotel door, for instance, would register images directly in front of it --NOT the adjacent door. And one tactical action near the end seems to have no credible reason for being done, except that it serves the author's ultimate plotting purposes.) But quibbles don't interfere with the fact that this is, overall, a very strong first novel. And, although there are sequels in the series, this opener comes to a very satisfying conclusion in itself; for readers who don't want to get sucked into another open-ended series, this book can function perfectly well as a completed stand-alone.

Paul Pessolano says

Not until now has there been a heroine that could rival Lisbeth Salander of "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo". That girl is Vanessa Michael Munroe and she is "The Informationist".

Michael, as she is called, comes from a missionary family that was based in Africa. Her family had little to do with her and she became strongly independent and became very familiar with the language, customs, and culture of the many African tribes.

In her teens she became involved with Francisco Beyard. Beyard made his living in Africa by gun and drug smuggling. He fell deeply in love with Michael who, one day, left him unexpectedly and without explanation.

Michael found she had a knack for finding out information that other people wanted and that her clients were willing to pay millions of dollars for that information.

A Texas billionaire, who lost his daughter in Africa over four years ago, has hired Michael to find out whether she is alive or dead. His only stipulation is that she must accept Miles Bradford as her companion and body guard.

Michael, Beyard, and Bradford pull together to unravel the mystery of the missing girl. They, especially Michael, seem to be marked for death because of their search. They must work their way through the different countries of Africa that has danger at every crossroads.

It doesn't take long for everyone to know that they are up against a formidable adversary in Michael. She leaves a trail of dead bodies that would equal any undercover agent. The situation turns ugly when she

realizes that things are going wrong because there is a traitor in her organization.

A highly entertaining story that reaches into the psyche of Michael that reveals a past that haunts her and may be responsible for her actions. After finishing "The Informationist", you will anxiously await the next Michael Munroe mystery.

Natalie says

I'm reviewing the audiobook version and although I threatened during the experience to tear my stereo from my car, I am happy to report that it is still intact within its housing.

What would push a gentle person such as myself toward such automotively destructive fantasies?

a) commuting in general b) an author who uses the same descriptive phrase for every character's posture while sitting over, and over, and over again! WTF? Where's the editor? How many times can a person sit with their forearms or elbows on their legs or knees? Why do they all do it? Why is it even worth talking about or mentioning if they all do it?

The saving grace(s) or *Why I don't need to go to stereo repair*:

- a) The main character is female and she kicks ass -very cool.
- b) She is crazy, but her psychoses are not explored as though they are the *raison d'être* of the story
- c) Relationships between various characters are well presented and the dynamics change over time
- d) the African locales and characters in the book -what great settings
- e) the special edge the main character has is her skill with languages, especially local dialects.
- f) the voice actress -she was good. An "A" for effort for Hillary Huber (Narrator).
- g) the audiobook production -it was above average in my limited experience.

All the above made for a fun read that was above the typical sensationalist audiobook production of popular fiction.

Emily says

Honestly, I'm only halfway through this but I have absolutely no idea why this book is rated so highly everywhere. Not to be "that guy" here but did anyone else READ the Girl With the Dragon Tattoo?? First of all, the main character Michael (who is actually a woman named Vanessa) is such an almost painfully blatant poor-man's version of Lisbeth Salander that it's almost ridiculous. HOW IS NO ONE CALLING THIS OUT?? And ok, not that every intelligent, super gifted, socially inept main female character should automatically get tagged to Salander but COME ON.

Michael speaks TWENTY TWO languages? That in itself is pretty damn ridiculous. Granted, most of them are briefly explained away as 'dialects', as if the author subconsciously realizes how unbelievable twenty two language proficiency really is. At least Lisbeth has a photographic memory which is a lot more believable and way more endearing considering her general attitude and complete lack of social skills. Gifted in one thing, handicapped in the other. It's a believable balance.

Michael, on the other hand, is a super gifted linguist with an almost equally ridiculous fighting capability that is only explained away as a fragmented version of her past involving an abusive caregiver figure. The author would have done better to only give away bits and pieces of Michael's past at a time (a la Salander) making the character more appealing and intriguing instead of giving it all away up front like a hurried exhale of breath. Literally, in about four or five paragraphs Michael's entire history is summed up to basically rebellion from parents because she's a super genius, wandering around Africa with some random dude she met through some other random dude, and then being physically abused by some OTHER random dude who was also traveling with them. And somehow this all adds up to angst and a supposedly bruised and endearing main character. When really, I'm just annoyed at how much the author keeps shoving the facts of Michael's supposed awesomeness on her audience instead of actually demonstrating it throughout the novel.

It's the typical rush job explanations of a wam-bam-thank-you-ma'am action/crime novel. Except even Patterson does a better job than this.

The dialogue is choppy at best, not well thought out and at times painful to read. At one point Michael holds a knife to a companion's throat after a very poorly described upper-hand gaining action scene that only takes about three sentences to get to across, saying, "I could have easily killed you. Never forget that." And then promptly dropping the knife. It's some of the most lazily constructed almost dime-store novel dialogue I've come across in awhile. Nobody talks like that. I'm sorry, it's ridiculous.

I don't know, maybe I'm just one of the many tainted by Stieg Laarson's total awesomeness at writing what is some of the best action/crime fiction I've come across in years but this is nowhere near that status. It's so depressingly far away from it in fact I'm not sure I could even be bothered to recommend this book to anyone. And I got it for free.

Not to mention, the main crux of the novel (who killed Emily Burbank?) is basically the entire premise of The Girl With the Dragon tattoo. Wealthy tycoon (insert old Swedish billionaire tycoon) hires genius investigator/informationist (Insert Lisbeth Salander) to find out what happened to his adopted daughter (insert Swedish niece here) who suddenly goes missing. Hello? Anyone else seeing this here?

Oh and also I'm not entirely sure why exactly I'm bothering to wade all the way through this dizzying epic of nonsense considering the "mystery" of what happened to Emily Burbank is given away in the first four pages of the novel via someone else's point of view. Sooo....why am I still here?

Good question.

aPriL does feral sometimes says

This is the worst book ever. The writing is boring, the plot is brain-dead dumb, and the character Vanessa Michael Munroe is the stupidest 'genius' I've run across since the biker Eric Von Zipper in the 'Beach Blanket Bingo' movies starring Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello. Munroe, the main character, unfortunately, is the dumbest one of all. No one is SUPPOSED to be dumb in 'The Informationist.' This is supposedly a serious thriller. Really. Really? This novel is such a stinking piece of dung.

Can anyone do a phrase count on how often Munroe thought, "she fought down the urge to cut his throat"? What a douchebag moron. Her focus IS rather amazing. However, if you notice a person thinks only one thought, and that one thought is to cut everyone's throat, would you be thinking 'she is so intelligent and

cool'? Or, like me, would you be thinking, 'RUN!'

If this character was on Paxil or if she had at least taken up chewing Khat, she might have more of a personality. But all the handsome lads love her manly physique and wooden unsmiling face and hands of steel. What a guy, uh, girl. Let's not forget the 47 saber nicks on her scarred hide, or her strange inability to avoid daily rape for three years while volunteering to be an adventurer with a jungle martial arts gang in Africa. She is a genius and manly and strong and independent, but in spite of her superior mentality she sticks around and pays up when she loses in martial arts lessons by giving head, body and soul to a man she "hates", every day! EVerY DAY! Holy masochistic charms! With all of her native brilliance, she can't think of some way to avoid being raped daily to learn her craft, like learning it somewhere else where being raped isn't on the table. Gee whiz.

There are Arnold Schwarzenegger movies and there are Jackie Chan movies and then you've got that zombie-walking Chuck Norris. Could any movie star imitate a piece of wood better than Chuck?

Well. Hello Munroe!

Chuck Norris demonstrated more emoting in his movies than anyone in these pages. A dead animal has more character than anyone living in these pages. Not to mention motivation or logic.

Emily, the victim who is supposed to need help, is a Stepford wife who has absolutely no interest in being rescued except when people tell her she should, at least for a minute. There is the bad guy in Texas who doesn't want Emily found but he sends the world's best tracker after her instead of a hit squad, which would have been the logical thing. Then there are the African towns, where young tourists are abused and threatened and beaten on their vacations, which is such fun that after many near death experiences and much hatred from the inhabitants the tourists study maps to find even more dangerous African countries to party on in rather than go home to their parents.

I wish I could say this all was a satire, but it was written obviously as a serious thriller with a serious group of characters. Despite the occasional and unintentional hilarious scenes, this is really such a bore to read.

Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says

The Informationist has one of the most daring and distinctive heroines I've personally read about. Vanessa Michael Monroe is practically a force of nature. Her personality is hard to pin down, even if you know her very well, which few people do. And she makes a very bad enemy. While some characters might go to Africa to run away from their past or to define a new life for themselves, Monroe is the opposite. She was born in Africa and raised there. Although she is Caucasian American descent, Africa flows in her veins and helped to make her who she was, and not all in good ways.

Monroe doesn't let fear define her, instead she walks in defiance of it. Being afraid is not her problem. It's the rage and anger she keeps under lock and key. She struggles against demons from her past that simmer in her blood and make her heart beat fast with the tribal beat of war. Control is a way of life when she knows just what she's capable of. Yet, she is unafraid to go into dangerous places when others would shirk such a responsibility. When Emily Burbank's adoptive father contacts her to find out what happened to his daughter

in Africa four years ago, she is going to have to go back to the place she was born and face her ugly past.

I love to read about heroines who are tough and resourceful. Who can kick butt just like the action heroes. Monroe is definitely one of those kinds of heroines. I like that she is very adaptable and clever about thinking through situations. While she has other weapons, she uses the one between her ears very well. Her personality is really abrasive and she's not what I would consider a typical "likable" heroine. And yet, there is something about her that resonates with me. I like that she is such a survivor. I mean, who could go through what she did and still be 100% sane and free of scars? She actually is quite sane, although I think deep down, she fears what lurks in the abyss she keeps locked away inside. She's sort of the opposite of Kurtz in *The Heart of Darkness*. She's been there and she walked away. It holds no appeal for her.

I liked the complex relationship that Monroe has with Francisco. I didn't expect it, yet when it happened, I thought, "Of course." I knew that Monroe would have to come full circle and get closure about Africa in order to heal. That process was ugly and painful, but necessary. I also liked her relationship with Miles. Each encounter helped to shape her in different ways, as relationship with others should do.

While I didn't like everything about the narrative, I did like how the author builds tension and unfolds the story, and keeps me guessing what's going to happen next. While one could easily draw conclusions about what happened in Equatorial Guinea, it's different from what I thought, and complicated. I think this is a book that lends itself well to audio, because some of the written facts about Emily's disappearance and the various places she went/the stonewalling she encounters, and Monroe's search in those places might be a bit dry on paper. I also think that some of the action scenes could have been more suspenseful and intensely written. There was a sense of risk, but it was a bit muted at times. As far as the narrator, I liked her voice a lot. She captures who Michael aka Monroe very well.

This is one of those books that doesn't build up one's faith in humanity. Corruption runs so deep and twisted in this world, and some places are built on this foundation. And while some of us who are lucky to live in a more lawful country, those same individuals go to other places in the world and make things worse in their conquest for power and money because they can get away with that in some places in the world, where life is cheap. Like some of my other thriller/suspense/action hero favorites, Monroe is there to teach them a lesson, but in her case, that lesson is a costly one for her as well.

I couldn't imagine living the life that Vanessa Michael Monroe has lived. One of the things I love about fiction is that I can go on a journey with a distinctive heroine like Monroe and see life through her lenses. I can feel her pain and her anger and experience the victories and defeats she has, and it helps me to understand that life is a complicated thing, but we can make it through things we never imagined possible.

This book might not work for everyone, but I found it interesting and thought-provoking. It felt unique and Monroe is an unforgettable heroine. She's kind of lawless in some ways, but deep down, she has a code that she won't stray from. She's a complicated woman. Readers who enjoy this kind of heroine or a reader looking for something different might enjoy *The Informationist*.

?Misericordia? ~ The Serendipity Aegis ~ ?????? ✿*♥? says

Overall, a bit weird, a bit different though engrossing. The strategic part was with way too much emphasis. And the emotional line rather crazyish:

You get employed by a guy #1

> You run from him
 >> You screw lots of guys (implied)
 >>> You screw some stranger somewhere on a business trip (#2)
 >>>> You turn to guy #1 for help
 >>>>> You use the guy #1
 >>>>>> You manipulate the poor SOB #1
 >>>>>>> You love the #1
 >>>>>>>> You get into a love triangle with the initial, brainy, #1 guy and another, hulkier, one #3
 >>>>>>>>> The poor brainy SOB #1 dies
 >>>>>>>>>> You go crazy over his death
 >>>>>>>>>>> Take your revenge, scaring half the jungle (Q:“Where is she?” “Fuck if I know. If we’re lucky, she jumped overboard.”(c))
 >>>>>>>>>>>>> You go to Morocco to rescrow the guy #2. Nice approach to replacement, huh? What a downer...

The timeline is also very thought-inducing:

1. Q: Each of his steps brought back the dread of her first entry into the United States. Similar doors and a similar experience—how much could have changed in nine years?(c)
2. Q: The arrangement had been going on as far back as Munroe had known him—that muggy summer night seven years before, when prejudice in a hole-in-the-wall bikers’ bar had turned to violence and she’d thrown in her lot with the underdog.(c)

From 1 it followed that Vanessa hasn't been to the US for 9 years. From 2 it followed she was in a fight in some godforsaken bikers' bar in the US 7 years prior.

3. Q: SIX YEARS AGO Kate Breeden had a thriving law practice in downtown Austin ... Breeden took what was left, put it into an investment fund, packed up, and moved to Dallas to start over. They’d met on the Southern Methodist University campus, where Breeden had returned for an M.B.A. and Munroe was in her sophomore year. (c)
4. Q: Breeden spoke again. “It’s been two years, Michael. Consider it a good omen. Come on home.”(c)
5. Q: Now came the possibility of an assignment far outside the area of her expertise, and for that reason it intrigued her—that, and the fact that she had not returned to the continent of her birth since abruptly departing it nine years ago. (c)

Overall it seems the timeline is as follows (some thinking and some very thorough explanatory feedback from the author were needed to understand the sequence):

'9 years ago, Munroe's first entry into the United States (which involved a visit to that room):

7 years ago, Munroe met Logan

6 years ago, Munroe met Breeden

2 years ago, Munroe last left the United States and hasn't returned since.' A bit tangled but it was a core part of the plot, allowing our gal to be a wiz with languages.

And don't even get me started on the villain(s). Naive, that's their second name!

The narrative is really different from this reading segment which guarantees the book its 5 stars. I always praise originality and novelty more than anything.

Basically, this book clicked quite a bit with me, which gets it bonus points.

Carol says

I picked this one up for several reasons. First, I love the title and the picture it evokes. An Informationist, someone who deals in information. In this case this person is one Vanessa "Michael" Munroe,. That's the second reason I picked up the book. Reviews depicted Vanessa/Michael as one strong female,a character trait I like in my reading. Third reason; reviews called it a gripping, fast paced, high octane thriller. And lastly, I picked it up as it is debut fiction, always a treat for me.

So did it deliver? Yes on several counts, almost too much so. Munroe is intelligent, tough, ruthless when she needs to be, and yet there is a feminine side that she knows how to play and says woman all the way. The story is definitely fast paced and would keep any thriller fan engaged. Munroe is being compared to Lizbeth Salander of Girl With the Dragon Tattoo fame but though I see some similarities, I didn't immediately make this connection. Yet, if you liked Dragon, I think you'd like this too.

I liked the way Taylor Stevens revealed bits and pieces of Munroe's background, the things that make her who she is, throughout the book. I love the switchback changing of names, rapid fire at times; Vanessa, Michael, Monroe, each revealing their own complexity of character, almost like three different people contributing to the intrigue of the story. What didn't quite work for me was Munroe's ability to come out on top of some very serious situations. You know what I mean, the Indiana Jones sort of story, where coming out alive is almost unbelievable. Normally, I'd say, hey this fiction, suspend belief, and just enjoy the ride. Here, though, it detracts from the whole for me. Munroe is enough of a guerrilla warfare type gal, gutsy and well-trained, that taking it over the top is not necessary.

I need not tell you much more. A synopsis of the book will give you a better picture of plot. A solid 4; a good summer read, great setting (Africa) and interesting character. I'm certain we'll see a sequel.

Be certain to read a bit about the author. Intersting to say the least.

Lisa Sansone says

I can't say that I liked it. I thought that it was boring, over-written, and unbelievable -- to the point of being silly. To be honest, I couldn't even enjoy it on the level of "fantasy" or escapism.

It reminded me of your standard, second-rate, mildly-ridiculous gun-for-hire novel - only this time written with a tormented female lead, instead of a tormented male lead.

I'm guessing that one is supposed to like the book largely because of the gender-switch. If you enjoy silly, poorly written fantasy novels -- where jaded men with super-macho abilities struggle with their demons, while beating the corrupt bad guys -- but you've wanted to see a woman in the lead role instead of a man -- well, this might be the book for you.

For me, though, the gender-switch didn't really add anything terribly interesting, other than perhaps a few laughs. The character basically ended up seeming just like a man, to me. Plus, there was nothing even slightly believable or "real" about the character.

And although it started off intriguingly enough, it just kept getting more ridiculous as the book went on.

I felt like I had to read the same, over-wrought scenes over and over again: (Vanessa: "Who is the traitor? I'm going to bitch-slap you until you tell me the truth! I wish I worked alone!!").

Some have compared the main character to Lisbeth Salander. While I found Salander to be compelling, I just thought this heroine was basically a flatly-drawn, selfish b**ch (sorry for my French)- with ridiculously unbelievable super-abilities. (And I have to laugh: if this was supposed to be some sort of a knock-off of The Dragon Tattoo series, that fact was completely lost on me!!)

I did appreciate the introduction to that part of Africa, but that's about all the positive I can say about it.

Tracy says

This is honestly one of the worst plotted books I've ever read. The dialogue is cheesy and the major plot points revealed at the strangest moments. For example, when the main characters are finally rescuing the woman they've been searching for the whole book, the author has the characters take the time to have her explain how she came to be in this predicament instead of getting her the hell out of there.

The action is disjointed and the reader needs to take great leaps in imagination to get from point "a" to point "b". I sometimes felt like I was reading a script for an old-fashioned melodrama with ham actors reading the dialogue.

All and all a big thumbs down.

Roxane says

Absolutely absorbing thriller. At times, Michael's character is just ludicrous in her abilities but that's okay. This was still one of the most enjoyable books I've read this year. Dark, violent, kind of sexy. That's what's up.

Robert says

She's a tool. A weapon. Like Jason Bourne or James Bond. Able to blend into her surroundings. She speaks 22 languages, and she's damn near deadly with a knife. And she's androgynous. She's Vanessa Michael Munroe. Or Michael for short.

Revenge might as well be her middle name, though. She reminded me of Lisbeth Salander with the way rage completely consumed her. And yet she still managed to show some heart, or at least her slightly abbreviated version of it. Emotions seemed to fill her, consume her, even as she struck out at the imperfections of this world.

Her ability to seek out, consume, and process information rapidly helped explain the title. Even when she was just traversing through a particular area, it felt as though her brain worked at a higher level than everyone else around her. Almost like a game of dominoes where she already had the perfect plan mapped out in her head.

The Equatorial Guinea setting proved as real and as feral to me as she was, and it was the perfect setting for

such an untamed creature. Had THE INFORMATIONIST been set anywhere else, it probably wouldn't have worked as well as it did.

Kudos to you, Ms. Stevens. Michael is one interesting, intriguing character, and this proved to be one interesting and intriguing read.

Cross-posted at Robert's Reads
